

ARMS CONTROL DIGEST



Conventional Forces in Europe

■ The dispute over the terms of the CFE Treaty, signed last November, continued to cast a pall over arms control negotiations during the period under review. Three issues stood out:

(1) concern by the West (as well as Asian states) over the last-minute Soviet shift of tens of thousands of pieces of "treaty-limited equipment" (TLEs) east of the Urals, to escape destruction under the Treaty;

(2) discrepancies between Western intelligence estimates and data provided by the USSR concerning equipment left behind in the zone of reductions. These discrepancies were said to have been "considerably reduced" as a result of revised intelligence estimates and new Soviet figures, however; and

(3) most important, Soviet claims that some 5,457 pieces of equipment were exempt from the Treaty limits because they had been "re-subordinated" to "coastal defence" or belonged to naval infantry, strategic rocket forces, or civil defence units. All twenty-one of the other CFE signatories insist that, under Article III of the Treaty, all ground-based equipment (with certain specified exceptions) is included, regardless of the military service to which it belongs.

In mid-February, President Bush reportedly offered a compromise whereby the Soviets, without disavowing their interpretation of the agreement, would conform to the numerical limits stipulated by the West. At first, the Soviets had offered only a pledge not to increase their naval ground weapons any further. Later, they reportedly offered to withdraw about half of the weapons in dispute, those associated with their "coastal defences."

In early April, after several letters between Bush and Gorbachev,

the American leader reportedly accepted a Soviet offer to withdraw the "coastal defence" weapons east of the Urals and destroy an equal number of older weapons there, but insisted that the naval infantry weapons be included as well, and that any destruction of the equipment outside of Europe be subject to Western inspection. The West would not require the destruction of some 1,700 TLEs in the Strategic Rocket Forces and civil defence units, or formal Soviet renunciation of its interpretation of the Treaty.

On 25 April, after meeting Secretary of State Baker at a resort in the Caucasus, Soviet Foreign Minister Bessmertnykh announced that the dispute had been settled and an American official confirmed that "the main obstacle" had been removed, apparently by Soviet agreement to include naval infantry equipment. However, the news proved premature, as it was reported on 7 May that Gorbachev would send General Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of the Soviet General Staff, to Washington in an attempt to resolve the dispute. [For more on the CFE agreement, see page 10.]

Strategic Arms Reduction Talks

■ For over a year, it has been reported that only relatively minor "technical" issues stood in the way of a START Treaty. However, neither side has appeared willing to make the necessary compromises to achieve final agreement. Meanwhile, in mid-March, the Bush Administration made it clear that it would not conclude a START Treaty until the CFE dispute had been settled. At the same time, it rebuffed Soviet overtures for another superpower summit until a START Treaty was ready to sign.

In Congressional testimony shortly after resigning as chief US START negotiator, on 17 April, Ambassador Richard Burt identified five outstanding issues: (1) the verification of heavy bombers and air-launched cruise missiles,

where the Soviets are concerned about a perceived US ability to quickly "break out" of the Treaty's limits; (2) monitoring and inspection of facilities for the production of mobile missiles, of greatest concern to the US; (3) the non-denial of missile test data, on which details remain unresolved; (4) the definition of a "new missile," with the US emphasizing the need for a "very clear demarcation between a new system and an old," so that a missile with only slight modifications could not escape the warhead limits placed on it; and (5) the question of "downloading," or permitting each side to reduce the number of warheads on a given type of missile, to reduce their concentration and thus, by making them less vulnerable, enhancing stability.

Burt characterized these as "second order but important issues" that could be solved "in the near future." To do so, he said, would "require some concessions on both sides." Fearing that increased Soviet military influence might enable the USSR to continue modernizing its nuclear forces at a time when the US was cutting back, he called for START to be "put back on the front burner."

Disarming Iraq

■ The UN's Gulf ceasefire resolution of 3 April, formally accepted by Iraq three days later, called for the "destruction, removal, or rendering harmless" of all of its chemical and biological weapons, ballistic missiles with a range of over 150 km, and any nuclear weapons or "nuclear weapons-usable material," as well as research, development, support or manufacturing facilities for such weapons. In addition, all states were instructed to prevent the supply of any other types of weapons, military training, and related technical support services to Iraq, subject to review after 120 days, "taking into account Iraq's compliance with this resolution and general progress towards

the control of armaments in the region." Finally, Iraq undertook not to "use, develop, construct or acquire" any weapons of mass destruction or associated materials and facilities in the future.

As required by the resolution, Iraq on 18 April submitted information acknowledging that it possessed fifty-two ballistic missiles and fifty-three warheads, including thirty chemical ones; and large stocks of chemical weapons, including over 10,000 rocket and artillery shells and aerial bombs, and over 1,000 tons of nerve and mustard gas. It denied, however, that it had any biological or nuclear weapons or related items; and insisted that it was not engaged in nuclear weapons production, that all of its nuclear materials were already under international safeguards, and that all of its "peaceful" nuclear research and development facilities had been destroyed in Allied bombing. Iraq's accounting was immediately and widely denounced as incomplete and inadequate.

On 22 April, in response to an International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) demand for further details on its nuclear programme, Iraq revealed what was described by an American official as "an extraordinarily detailed account of the status, location and amount of all of the enriched material." It also revealed a number of nuclear research installations and stocks of fissile materials unknown to the West. However, the list was still criticized as incomplete for failing to include nuclear weapons development laboratories such as one at al Qaqaa.

Under the terms of the UN resolution, Secretary-General Perez de Cuellar will appoint a Special Commission to carry out on-site inspection of Iraqi biological, chemical and missile capabilities and oversee their destruction. The IAEA is to inspect nuclear facilities and dispose of all nuclear weapons-usable materials. □

— RON PURVER